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Bangalore Mirror ON SATURDAY

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Bengaluru's lakes top list of biologically contaminated waterbodies with high levels of fecal coliform, total coliform bacteria

LAKE FEAR

Varthur Lake has maximum fecal coliform at 1.5 billion MPN/100 ml

| Garima Prasher
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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

> **"Such high levels of biological contaminants can move through the soil and end up in the groundwater table, impacting the health of the citizen** — V Ramprasad, founder, Friends of Lakes

Biological contamination in multiple Bengaluru lakes has long passed safe limits for humanity. The most recent report by the Central Pollution Control Board on water quality of 620 waterbodies across 28 states is proof.

The analysis conducted by the pollution watchdog under the National Water Monitoring Programme (NWMP) 2021 showed Bengaluru's lakes at the top of the list of waterbodies with severe biological contamination: high levels of fecal coliform or total coliform bacteria.

While the maximum fecal coliform level in Bellandur was found to be 1.2 billion MPN/100 ml, the total coliform level was

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 »

Just 14% women officers in city police

Bengaluru has 2,000 female officers out of total 17,000 police officers

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

According to the India Justice Report (IJR) 2022, the city has 2,000 female officers out of the total 17,000 police officers, which shows that women only constitute 14% of the total police workforce.

Karnataka despite being on the top for justice delivery has only 11% female police officers, stated the report.

"At subordinate level, the ratio is much better; however, at higher levels in the police department, the difference in the gender ratio is very evident. At officers' level like SPs and above there are far fewer women. But in recent years we have seen an increase in the number of female officers. It is because there is provision in UPSC where it states that women officers can be preferred if they come for the interview, to bridge the difference. Earlier even in our UPSC batches, there used to be fewer women; female officers would be in single digits but now, in the batch of 150 people, there are 30-35 women," said Suman D Pennekar, DCP (traffic), west division.

She added that there was an order issued by the Karnataka government to increase the recruitment of women. "It will take some years to have an equal ratio of men

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11 »

3 THINGS TO DO

01 Sound of Music

This Sunday the music collective REProduce Artists will be bringing their Listening Room to the Indian Music Experience Museum. The Delhi-based collective of 12 artists plans to showcase their talent in spaces that allow audiences to enjoy sound on their own. The Listening Room aims to engage with music and video in sequential plays. **Where: Indian Music Experience Museum; When: Sunday, April 16; 4 to 9 pm**

02 Epic play

Grab a chance to watch Draupathi, a mega theatrical production about the heroic princess of epic Mahabharata. Inaugurated last August, the play has captivated audiences across the nation. The dialogues have been written by Satish Kumar in poetic style for the first half and for the second half the poetic lines are from Bharathiyar's Paanjaali Sabatham. The music and background of the play has been composed in Carnatic style music by Raj Kumar Bharti. **Where: Bangalore Gayana Samaaja, KR Road, Basavanagudi When: Saturday, April 22; 6 pm**

03 Crime spot

ENAD, a Bengali performing arts group is going to present their latest production 'Red Herring'. The play is based on a crime novel, Murder on the Mews by Agatha Christie. The play is for the duration of 90 minutes and is multilingual (Kannada, Bengali, Hindi and English). **Where: Prabhat Kaladwarka, Koramangala Club When: April 22**

Here's to new beginnings

Sikh families gather to pray at Gurudwara in Ulsoor on Friday on the occasion of Baisakhi

Earthly rides: Let's go

14 bikers from Bengaluru come together to ride across three states to plant saplings and create awareness ahead of World Earth Day which is on April 22

Y Maheswara Reddy
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It might be a common habit among the youth to go on a trip during the weekend and spend leisure time at their favourite tourist spots. However, a group of 14 bikers came together to contribute to the environment on Sunday on the occasion of World Earth Day which is scheduled to be celebrated on April 22.

The 14 bikers – seven male and seven female – made an attempt not only to create awareness among the public on the importance of World Earth Day but also planted saplings at three different locations in three states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Dilip Reddy, a biker from Marathahalli, said that bikers wanted to give back to the mother earth by planting saplings so that future generations too have a healthy life.

"I contacted other bikers of some groups to participate in the trip to two states – Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu – to create awareness on the importance of planting saplings. Prior to this, I went bike riding to create awareness on the importance of girl child. I am very happy to be part of the 14-member biker team that has successfully created awareness among the public to promote planting saplings," he said.

Feeling great for being the part of a bikers team that successfully planted saplings at three different locations of three states, Aishwarya Gowda, an IT employee from Nagarabhavi said that she considered planting saplings as her contribution to the earth. "The trip was very interesting. Planting saplings is our contribution to the environment," she added.

The group of 14 bikers comprising seven male and an equal number of female riders. The group rode to three different locations in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu to plant saplings

The 14-member bikers team gathered at Marathahalli at 6 am and left for Kolar. They planted 15 saplings on the roadside near Woody's Restaurant, Kolar. "The Woody's Restaurant has agreed to water the saplings," informed Dilip.

Later the bikers team proceeded towards Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh. They planted 25 saplings at vacant space near Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) Kalyana Mantapa in the presence of TTD board members. Later the bikers' team left Vellore in Tamil Nadu and planted 10 saplings on a vacant space at Vaniyambadi. Finally, the bikers returned to Marathahalli by 6:10 pm, covering a distance of 428 km. Ravi Kiran Manandi, one of the bikers and a businessman from Jayanagar told Bangalore Mirror that he wants to participate in more bike ride programmes that contribute something to society.

> **"I contacted other bikers to participate in the trip in order to create awareness on the importance of planting saplings**
> – Dilip Reddy

"This was the first time I participated in a bike ride that covered three states. I am very happy to be part of this bikers team," he said.

The other bikers are: Pavithra, Anil, Reshma, Ambika, Suhas, Praveen, Yeshaswini, Benu, Roshan, Vaibhav, and Venkatesh.

FOOTPATH, MY FOOT: THERE IS NO SPACE TO PLACE A TOE

Forget about other encroachments, govt agencies too eating up pedestrian's space with poles, transformers, seized vehicles

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As the city expands in all directions, one urban infrastructure is shrinking -- footpaths. Various public utilities continue to obstruct the pedestrian's path and the walker has no option but to slip and slide to get by.

Year after year, hundreds of pedestrians lose their lives in the city. Pedestrian safety can be ensured largely with the provision of wide and obstruction-free footpaths. Even in spaces with wide footpaths, obstructions cause pedestrians to step onto roads occupied by fast-moving traffic. Apart from vendors' carts and vehicles, footpaths are also encroached on by utilities by parastatal agencies.

"There is very little space to walk around in the city and government agencies are taking over footpaths. On Vellara junction, the footpath is occupied by traffic signal poles and barricades. Vellara Junction is a busy road and the footpath is occupied. The fast-moving traffic in the stretch is a threat to pregnant, elderly and children," said civic activist Raghavendra B Pachhapur.

He added that the issue is the same near Lalbagh Road as well. "Adjacent to Lalbagh while travelling from the main gate to the West gate, they have widened the road and the footpath is limited to 5ft and even in that space, they are digging holes to erect poles. Some stretches are just 3ft and they are also occupied. From the West gate to Minerva Circle, footpaths are dug up again. In some cases, traffic booths are being erected on footpaths. Even in MG Road, near Karnataka High Court premises, the footpath is being dug up," added Pachhapur.

> **"On Millers Road made under Smart City, the footpath has been encroached by the BESCOM transformer**

Another civic activist, Rajkumar Dugar, said that BESCOM has blocked the space on Millers Road. "On Millers Road made under Smart City, the footpath has been encroached by the BESCOM transformer. Following the transformer are scrap vehicles seized by traffic officials. Next to that, there is a vehicle parking option. Pedestrians have to step down from the footpath and get back on later, " added Dugar.

Activists say that widening the footpath is not the solution, keeping the footpath clear for pedestrian usage is the only solution. They also added that the footpath width needs to be kept uniform.

Traffic experts say that the problem is manifold. "In Bengaluru, not even five per cent of footpaths are good. The preference for footpaths must be given to residential areas. In many places, slabs are coming loose and huge trees have been planted. People can fall during the day time and at nighttime, the condition is worse. While traffic signal poles are unavoidable, the transformer can be placed underground but it's a costly affair," said traffic expert, MN Sreehari.

Additionally, the road is meant for traffic and a footpath for pedestrians. "All over the city, vehicles are parked on roads. Paid or unpaid parking, one-sided parking is not the solution. The Palike needs to provide adequate parking facilities. Two-wheelers can be found parked around metro stations," added Sreehari.

Bannerghatta Park celebrates new arrival

Zebra Kaveri gave birth to a foal at 4:30 am on Friday bringing joy to the staff and visitors of Bengaluru's Bannerghatta Biological Park. The sex of the foal is yet to be determined, but it is currently under the observation of the veterinary team and animal keepers. Dr Umashankar KS, Assistant Director (Veterinary Services), has confirmed that the foal is active and suckling. This latest addition to the zebra family brings the total number of zebras in the zoo to six.

Dr. Sunil Panwar, Executive Director of the Bengaluru Bannerghatta Biological Park, said that all necessary arrangements have been made to provide the best possible care to the mother and the newborn. The zoo has created a partition within the enclosure to ensure privacy and safety for the zebra family. Zebras have a gestation period of 12 to 13 months, and the foal has brown stripes that will eventually turn black. Visitors to the park can catch a glimpse of the newborn. **BMB**

11 killed in 2 road accidents

#Madikeri/Tumakuru

Eleven people were killed in two road accidents in Karnataka on Friday.

Six people, including two women and three children, were killed and two injured grievously after the car they were travelling in collided head-on with a government bus at Sampaje Gate in Kodagu district, police said.

They were going from Maddur in Mandya district to Sullia in Dakshina Kannada district when their vehicle was hit by the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation bus.

In the other mishap, five people, including four of a family comprising a couple and two children, were killed and seven injured in a collision involving a private bus and a sports utility vehicle at Sira in Tumakuru district. They were residents of Bengaluru and were on their way to Challakere in Chitradurga where they hail from, the police said.

The impact of the accident was so severe that the SUV was badly mangled and bodies were mutilated.

It is said that the bus crashed into a road divider before hitting the SUV.

Those injured were in the bus and they have been admitted to a nearby hospital. **PTI**

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Kengeri: Good infra & affordable homes

'Properties around Kengeri are not just known for being affordable but also as they offer great basic amenities'

If you are looking for affordable flats, then Kengeri and its surrounding areas are an excellent option. Kengeri is known for its good infrastructure and several infrastructure projects that are underway. The Metro connectivity to Kengeri is a significant advantage as many properties are coming up around the Metro station, which makes it easy for residents to reach the Metro stations in a matter of minutes.

This connectivity has made it easy to travel to different parts of the city by avoiding the traffic on Mysuru road.

According to Ranjan P, a realtor, "Properties around Kengeri are not just known for being affordable but also offer excellent basic amenities including good road connectivity, water and electricity connection. Mysuru Road is well connected with various locations. Hence, many prefer to buy properties here as it will people to reach any of the destination."

Apart from Metro connectivity, Kengeri railway station will also be connected to other areas via the sub-urban network. This connectivity will enable the growth of many residential areas that were next to railway tracks but lacked proper transportation.

The sub-urban train corridors are spread from Kengeri to Whitefield, KSR Bengaluru railway station to Devanahalli (via Yeshwanthpur), Chikkabanavara to Baiyyappanahalli and Heelalige to Rajanukunte. The total number of stations will be 57, and the trains will have air-conditioned coaches. There will be many junctions where the sub-urban trains will have common/adjacent stations with railways and Metro.

In fact, there will be 23 stations that will have connections with sub-urban trains and railways, five stations which will connect one sub-urban corridor to another and 11 Metro stations will have connections with sub-urban trains.

The proposed elevated corridor will be about 15m high due to the existence of a large number of foot over/under bridges.

As areas like Kengeri are closer to the railway station, residents of the area can easily hop on to sub-urban trains in the future and head to different parts of the city without getting stuck in city traffic. Overall, Kengeri and its surrounding areas are an excellent option for those looking for affordable flats.

– Prakash VL

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Under-construction homes: How to make smart decisions

Avoid these mistakes if you plan to buy an under-construction house

An under-construction home is more often than not a lucrative deal for both investors and end-users. However, there are a few things one needs to pay attention to before investing or buying such properties. Therefore, our experts list some of the common mistakes homebuyers commit when looking to buy an under-construction home, and how to avoid them.

Research flaw

Before purchasing an under-construction home, it's important to conduct a background check about the developer. Check for his reputation, track record, and quality of construction. Look for information about his past projects and any legal issues he must have faced. Visiting the developer's completed projects and interacting with the residents staying there could also give you a fair idea about his quality of work. Also, scan the news to know if any recent controversies surround the developer. Himanshu Jain, VP – sales, marketing, and CRM of a realty firm adds, "One must only invest in a project by a credible builder with a very good track-record. Buyers must also consult a lawyer and know about their legal rights in case of any complications later."

Read carefully

Be sure to read the fine print in the purchase deal, including any clauses or terms that may be hidden/not clear in the document. It is best to consult a lawyer for this. Do not sign any document in a hurry.

Payment aspect

"Many under-construction homes require buyers to make payments at different stages of the construction process. It's important to understand the schedule and make sure that you can afford the payments. If taking a home loan, speak to the bank regarding the payment cycle," says Santosh Kumar, vice-chairman, Anarock Group.

Inspection

"Do not just make stage-wise payments, visit the site and ensure that construction is getting completed as per the schedule. It's important to inspect the property at various stages," adds Kumar.

Added costs

In addition to the cost of the home, there are other costs associated with purchasing an under-construction property such as registration fees, stamp duty, and other miscellaneous expenses that you should factor in. Also, consider the cost of accommodation till the time your under-construction home is ready. Ensure that you have a contingency plan.

Legal

"Before buying an under-construction property, it's important to check that the builder has obtained all necessary permissions and approvals from the relevant authorities," mentions Kumar.

Investment angle

Jain elaborates, "Investing in an under-construction property usually yields a higher return on investment due to an extended window period between the buying stage and delivery timeline."

– Gladwin Menezes, Times Property

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Trash talk: Doddanekundi action plan looking good

Barrier at lake entrance will be made to stop flow of waste into it

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During rejuvenation work, BBMP officials were taken aback to see a large amount of plastic waste entering the lake from the rajakaluve at Doddanekundi and Mahadevpura, behind Ferns Habitat

Doddanekundi lake, which was in a deplorable condition a few months ago, is now undergoing rejuvenation, thanks to the efforts of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Lakes Department. However, during the process, officials were taken aback to see a large amount of plastic waste entering the lake from the rajakaluve at Doddanekundi and Mahadevpura, behind Ferns Habitat.

To prevent such waste from entering the water body, the BBMP has come up with an action plan.

Clement Jaykumar from the Mahadevpura Task Force said, "A trash barrier will be installed at the entrance of the lake to stop the flow of trash materials inside the lake.

The BBMP stormwater drains (SWDs) are going to be protected from being choked with garbage after the putting up of 9-feet-high fencing."

In addition, BBMP marshal teams are carrying out enforcement in nearby localities and keeping a vigil to ensure that no waste is thrown inside the rajakaluve.

"We are checking nearby spots to prevent the dumping of garbage on the road and even in the SWD.

Starting from Friday, we have appointed marshals to carry out strict enforcement near the SWD. We will start fining people, and strict action will be taken. After the lake is restored, marshals will be appointed to carry out enforcement at the lake premises as well," said a marshal officer.

Jaykumar further added, "Four months ago, the rejuvenation of the lake was undertaken. The lake is now under comprehensive development. A temporary diversion channel was created at the lake to clear out water from the lake. Currently, the lake is dry without water. A large amount of plastic waste was observed coming from the nearby rajakaluves at the temporary diversion channel. If there was no diversion channel, all the waste would have directly gone inside the lake."

> **"We have appointed marshals to carry out strict enforcement near the stormwater drain starting from Friday. We will start fining people**
>
> – Marshal officer

The recent rains caused parts of Mahadevpura to show signs of flooding, resulting in a larger part of the dry plastic waste gushing out from the nearby stormwater drains near the Doddanekundi lake and accumulating at the temporary diversion channel. BBMP officials were shocked to see the huge amount of waste accumulated near the lake, filled with slush.

"The rejuvenation of Doddanekundi Lake is a massive undertaking, and we are committed to ensuring its success. We are doing everything in our power to prevent any kind of waste from entering the water body, and we are confident that our efforts will bear fruit," said a BBMP official.

Lake coliform report: 'BWSSB guilty of dereliction of duty'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

as astonishing as 1.2 billion MPN/100 ml. Similarly, Varthur recorded the maximum fecal coliform level at 1.5 billion MPN/100 ml, and the total coliform level at 1.6 billion MPN/100 ml.

Some other city lakes featured on the top of the list of waterbodies across the country with the worst biological contamination include Nagavara, Jakkur, Kaikondanahalli, Allasandra, Hessarghatta, Sankey, and so on. The level of fecal and total coliform bacteria in city lakes touted as healthy waterbodies were found to be high as well. For instance, the total fecal coliform level in the Sankey tank was found to be as high as 3.3 million MPN/ 100 ml and the maximum value of total coliform was as high as 4.3 million MPN/100 ml.

As per CPCB standards the permissible level of fecal coliform bacteria in waterbodies considered suitable for bathing, contact water sport and commercial fisheries is 100 MPN/100 ml. Similarly, in waterbodies suitable only for industrial cooling, aesthetics, navigation, and controlled waste disposal, the permissible level of fecal coliform bacteria is 500 MPN/100 ml.

Experts said while biological contamination is an issue that is prevalent in waterbodies that receive untreated sewage, the astonishing levels of biological contamination indicate that the agency responsible to treat sewage, which is BWSSB, is guilty of dereliction of duty.

"Such high levels only show how generously BWSSB has been allowing contamination of waterbodies and posing health threats to citizens. While on one hand, we talk about Swacchh Bharat Abhiyaan, and on the other, untreated sewage is flowing into wetlands and waterbodies," said Dr TV Ramachandra, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science (IISc).

This high level of biological contamination can find its way into the groundwater table polluting the area's aquifers, and posing serious health concerns, according to experts.

"Such high levels of biological contaminants can move through the soil and end up in the groundwater table, impacting the health of the citizen. Criminal cases must be filed against heads of agencies such as BWSSB, KSPCB, and BBMP for being severely lackadaisical. We are staring at a health hazard similar to covid-19," said V Ramprasad, founder, Friends of Lakes.

Healthcare experts said the exceeding range of fecal coliform bacteria indicates the water is contaminated by pathogens or viruses present in the fecal matter of humans, animals, or sewage and gets transmitted through the fecal-oral route. This poses health risks.

"Fecal coliform bacteria tend to affect health by spreading waterborne diseases like cholera, dysentery, typhoid fever, gastroenteritis, and hepatitis A. Several pathogens of zoonotic origin are associated with gastrointestinal symptoms. E coli , a subtype of fecal coliform, stays in the gut and affects the gut flora, which results in GI intolerance and gastrointestinal diseases," said Dr Soumita Biswas, chief nutritionist, Aster RV Hospital.

According to water resource experts, lack of transparency and accountability on the part of government agencies is the primary reason behind environmental degradation, including pollution of water resources. "I visited Bellandur and Varthur lakes a week ago and witnessed untreated sewage entering both waterbodies. While BWSSB had promised 99% water treatment in KC Valley, it has not been fulfilled. There is a lack of transparency and accountability. The fact that the chairman of the water board has advocated activists should not enter the STPs to take water samples for analysis, proves that they have things to hide. If they were discharging their duties, they would have invited people to test the water samples," added Dr Ramachandra.

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Traffic hazard

Byraveshwara Layout

An encroachment on the footpath at the entrance to Byraveshwara Layout is causing traffic jams and accidents.

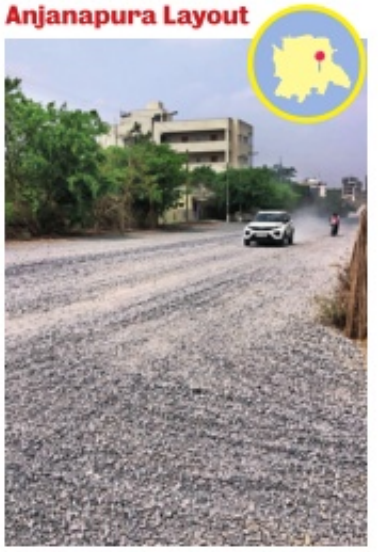
Waste woes

Sarakki

This is the current condition at the junction of 12th A cross and 3rd cross, Sarakki where garbage is strewn all around.

Bad road

Anjanapura Layout



80-feet road in LBS Nagar, Anjanapura Layout is in horrible shape.

Elephant-proof fence

Forest dept's measures such as tracking herds using radio collars, erection of barricades in conflict zones have managed to reduce human casualties of jumbo encounters

File photo of an elephant herd entering a village in Mysuru

Garima Prasher
garima.prasher
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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Human casualties due to the elephant attack in Karnataka have decreased over the last three years. According to official data, while 29 human deaths due to elephant conflicts were recorded in 2019-20, this number went down to 23 in 2020-21. Last year, only 17 human casualties were reported across the state.

Officials from the Karnataka Forest Department say the slight improvement in the number of human casualties is due to various efforts taken up by the department in the recent past.

"The number has slightly come down but is not a drastic reduction. We have a system to identify the herd of elephants that is crop raiders. We radio collar such herds and monitor their movements regularly not just to obstruct their path, but also to warn the villagers," said Kumar Pushkar, APCCF (wildlife), Karnataka Forest Department.

The biggest reason for the drop, as per the officials, is the erection of barricades in the conflict-prone areas. Moreover, after the formation of the elephant task force, there has been a consistent decline in conflicts.

With more than 6,000 elephants, the number of human deaths is limited to around 20. In Chattisgarh, with around 250 elephants, the number of human deaths is around 100. Similarly, in Madhya Pradesh, with a total elephant population of 60, as many as 90 human deaths were recorded last year.

"We have plugged almost the entire outer boundary of forest areas with elephant-proof trenches and solar fencing. It is now very difficult for the elephants to find ways and venture into villages. Our priority areas have already been tackled. However, since we are dealing with intelligent animals that still figure out gaps to sneak out, we have been focusing on plugging those gaps too over the last one and a half years," added Pushkar.

However, wildlife activists say a decrease in human casualties does not imply a drop in conflict cases. They allege a lack of vigilance on the part of the forest department when it comes to managing elephant corridors in conflict-prone areas.

While the government has identified nine elephant corridors across the state, activists allege that illegal constructions have sprung up in these areas and no action has been taken by the officials concerned.

"Just because the number of deaths is reducing does not mean the number of conflicts is going down as well. The department has been looking at temporary solutions for managing elephant-human conflict. While nine corridors were identified in 2005 based on a study, no action has been taken on ground to maintain them. Hoards of illegal constructions have come up in these areas," said a wildlife activist on the condition of anonymity.

Experts claim since fencing forest areas in difficult terrain is not possible, the department must look at purchasing private lands and creating more corridors.

"The department must identify the bottlenecks which are already mentioned in the report prepared by a Center-level committee years ago. One of the recommendations is creating corridors by purchasing private lands. Many people owning these lands in conflict-prone areas are ready to sell, but the forest department has not been proactive," claimed another activist.

Fund crunch?

Project Elephant comes with a particular budget scheme of the Central government and the total allocation is of Rs 7 crore. Out of which only 60% comes from the Center. However, senior officials from the state forest department informed BM that only the first installment, which is 25%, under Project Elephant has been released so far.

"We have not received the Centre's second, third, and fourth installments yet. While there is a fund crunch when it comes to funds being released from the center, the state government has extended its support. Under the rail barricade project, we have received Rs 70 crore and under the man-animal conflict scheme, we have received Rs 91 crore so far from the state government," said Pushkar.

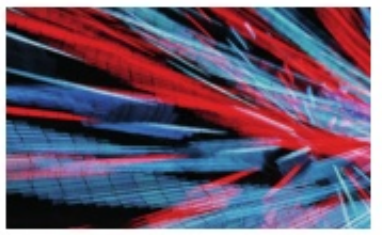
> **"We radio collar such herds and monitor their movements regularly not just to obstruct their path, but also to warn the villagers**
>
> –Kumar Pushkar, APCCF (wildlife)

RAJMOHAN SUDHAKAR

EVER CHANGING MOODS

Write to him at c-rajmohan.sudhakar@timesgroup.com

Anarchy of tech



Legendary Japanese filmmaker Yasujiro Ozu's works are an illuminating study for filmmakers, distinguished for the simple, yet profound, and pioneering style of portraying the ordinariness of human life.

Since the inception of the big tech complex, such simplicity of creative pursuit is lost on unnecessary complications. Tech is hollowing out the creative enterprise - of its subtle charms, focussed only on craft and sophistication, depriving art of quintessential humanness.

Though telephones have morphed into mini film production studios, users/film directors are unable to produce masterful works as Ozu's.

That said, some time ago, media attention was drawn to deepfakes — videos manipulated by so-called 'artificial intelligence of machine learning'. Some deepfakes had known personalities including politicians spouting gibberish that left the trolls wanting. Some were engaged to malign public figures, critics of the establishment, including journalists.

Then, debate centred on how to rein in deepfakes that could inflict irreparable harm on society. Deepfakes gave us a glimpse of how so-called 'AI' could blur the line between reality and fantasy. Critics were quick to point to the danger - these videos could be weapons at the hands of disinformation networks.

Fact is, now reality and fantasy are unrecognisable in the digital plane even for the discerning, courtesy large language models (LLMs) that power chatbots. Curious thing is, at present, from the world of so-called AI, the term 'fake' has disappeared; perhaps removed by design. 'Generative AI' has taken its place. Cunning as it were, this is an instance of terminology employed to further another tech digression.

'Artificial intelligence or algorithms' dive deep into online data servers — text, images, videos, programming languages, art, music and so on — and try all possible combinations/rearrangements to conjure up Frankenstein's monsters.

But so-called 'AI' does not take into account what realism - of art, politics or culture - constitutes to humans. AI cannot know something inherently human has to remain human. Reality/creativity has in it the creation of a physical living being in the physical world, or the result, consequence, or aftermath of individuals' actions in an organic setting; not a combination, remix or rehash of actions of several unrelated or perhaps non-existing individuals stitched into an abominable piece of work from just digital references — that may or may not be unique; and nevertheless isn't human.

It is intriguing why this type of nonsense now churned out by 'AI' chatbots are not termed 'fake', as was the case with deepfakes, but celebrated as feats.

The fallout of tech's forced social disruptions is as unpredictable as the weather. 'AI' shall deliver a nastier blow to society than the now floundering social media, especially in the economically deprived global south.

More importantly, tech's overt eagerness to disrupt the press only exposes the inevitability of independent media and how decisively critical is free press today.

The god complex of the tech giants now have us groping in the dark for direction in varied walks of life in a span of roughly twenty odd years. Society may be now used to interacting through certain social messaging platforms powered by tech; that does not mean such a platform, solely, is the definitive source of news.

Certainly, this has to be one of the pipe dreams of a neoliberal entrepreneur who goes trophy hunting for the latest innovation, and keeps pressing buttons for 'fun' like a bully marauding elephant.

If tech oligopolies would have it, what they peddle would be news and the rest labelled disinformation. That's a stretch.

A case in point, NPR in the United States halting Twitter posts is the beginning of what was to transpire eventually. A standoff between big tech media manipulators and the press itself is a positive sign that shall redefine tech and media — a necessary distinction disliked by the neoliberal power centres.

Tech shortchanging us, the press, arts and letters, perhaps everything everywhere all at once, isn't what was envisaged as digital innovation.

Tech's role is to augment the reach of media, information dissemination, arts and letters and help fill gaps in science and research; not to sabotage the media's identity, credibility or place - rightful and paramount - in the collective. Today, social tech is talking down to the media while manipulating and censoring news for certain entities that intend to undermine the world's political and economic future.

That a 20-year-old innovation (or unnecessary deviation?) wants to decimate centuries-old tenets of the press is a preposterous proposition.

If big tech is censoring the press at the behest of ultra rich political outfits and crony corporations, the former isn't furthering but suppressing democracy and oppressing those who cherish democratic values.

'AI' isn't what is needed in the global south; what is required is a safety net to shield vulnerable communities from the fallout of the climate emergency, rising inequities, joblessness, skyrocketing prices of fuel and commodities.

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BENGALURU SPEAKS

and gets heard on this page

STORYBEHINDTHEPHOTO

SCALY TEXTURE

An iguana foraging in a private farm in Bengaluru

The picture was clicked by BM reader **Shreya Oruganti**

If you have a picture and a story to share, send us the picture with your name and number at **mybangaloremirror@timesgroup.com**

What do we want? Fair taxi fare for all

Taxi associations and commuters demand policy to limit charge for travelling to airport

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The customers, owners, and drivers of taxis are demanding the implementation of a "one airport, one taxi fare" policy in order to alleviate the burden of high taxi fares on air passengers. Ramesh Gowda, president of the Kempegowda International Airport Taxi Owners and Drivers Welfare Association emphasised that fixed and reasonable fares would benefit everyone.

"We urge the government to implement a 'one airport, one taxi fare' policy that would be very convenient for passengers," he said.

Currently, digital meters are mandatory in Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) taxis, and passengers are charged a fixed price based on the meter reading. However, app-based taxis such as Ola and Uber do not follow this schedule and charge fares arbitrarily, leading to higher fares during peak times and at night.

Customers are urging the government to introduce a uniform taxi fare system based on the mode of travel, including factors such as AC or non-AC, vehicle seating capacity, and vehicle class.

Taxi drivers are also suffering significant losses, as they are forced to pay 30-40 per cent of their earnings as commission to app-based taxi companies. Under the one airport, one taxi fare system, drivers and car owners would only have to pay a fixed 10 per cent commission to the aggregators, reducing their losses. The drivers and car owners have threatened to boycott the Assembly elections in order to extort passengers unless this system is implemented.

Sujit S, a regular commuter, said, "Overall, the implementation of a one airport, one taxi fare system would be highly beneficial for passengers as it would ensure fixed, reasonable fares for all modes of travel. We urge the government to take action to implement a uniform taxi fare system based on the mode of travel, which would help reduce the burden of high taxi fares on air passengers."

Reacting to this, Transport Commissioner SN Siddaramappa said that the case regarding the implementation of mandatory digital fare meters was currently in court, and the authorities will soon provide information on fixing the fares.

File photo of Kempegowda International Airport, B'luru

Currently, digital meters are mandatory in KSTDC taxis, and passengers are charged a fixed price based on the meter reading

DID YOU KNOW?

Rajajinagar was inaugurated by Maharaja of Mysuru Jayachamaraja Wadiyar. The pillar in the suburb is named after C Rajagopalachari. After the contractor PS Ranganatha built the Ashoka Pillar in Jayanagar, he was asked to build a similar pillar. As a result, he constructed a pillar in the suburb of Rajajinagar. A plaque in the Rajajinagar pillar states that 1,000 acres of land that was given for the locality was divided into industrial and residential areas. It is said that Rajajinar was built at a cost of Rs 50 lakh. Currently, the suburb is known to have famous landmarks of Bengaluru such as Orion Mall, Iskcon Temple, and more.

GET HEARD WITH MIRROR

9591233247

Let's see how much you know about Namma Bengaluru, folks. Tell us something incredible and mind-boggling about this beautiful city and our editors and researchers will check it out. If it's credible, we'll give it a shout-out, with your name and picture.

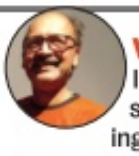
TAPTHECHATTER

where Bengalureans speak their mind

What are the facilities that the government should ensure at the bus stops and stations in the city?

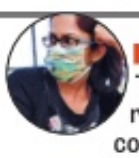
Dipali, BM Reader
Bus stops are very poorly maintained in the city. They always seem dilapidated and smell unpleasant. So the first step I would suggest is keeping up hygiene. They should be thoroughly cleaned and sanitised at regular hours.

Seetharam, BM Reader
Proper lighting should be ensured for the safety of women, especially in the early morning and after dusk. Clear signs to indicate stops and facilities for basic seating structures and shelters for bad weather conditions are must.



Vivek, BM Reader
I think all bus stops and stations should have access to clean drinking water and restrooms since these are the most common necessities. They should also have a map and time table of particular routes, and bus numbers.

Nirmala, BM Reader
Installing kiosks that distribute city maps and brochures to tourists, providing them with information on places to visit and details about nearby hotels. I also recommend improving facilities for the disabled.



Kshama, BM Reader
The government should prioritise repairing existing bus shelters and constructing adequate restroom facilities for both genders. I also suggest the installation of drinking water fountains at bus stops and stations.

Vaidyanathan, BM Reader
The government should provide basic amenities such as drinking water, restrooms, first aid, police protection, and proper signage at bus stops and stations. This includes clear information on bus schedules and destination names.

SPEAK TO US

How do you think politicians can be made to focus on burning issues such as climate change?
If you want to be featured in this section, mail us your answer to this question, in 25 words, with 'Tap The Chatter' in the subject line. Mail us with your name, occupation & a picture at mybangaloremirror@timesgroup.com or WhatsApp us on 9591233247

It's crunch time for Karnataka

Political parties feel each other's heat in run up to state assembly polls

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As the assembly elections draw near, many political parties are gearing up to field their candidates. The major players in the state - BJP, Congress, and JD(S) - are facing tough competition from smaller parties like AAP, Kalyanaka Karnataka party, KRS, SDPI, NCP, AIADMK, and AIMIM.

The Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) has decided to field six candidates in the twin coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi to make its presence felt in the region. The party has already decided on 16 candidates in the state, and the nomination process is already underway. Two more candidates are likely to be fielded by the party in the state. Although the party does not expect to win in this region, it wants to register its presence in its strongholds. According to Abdul Latheef Puttur, party state general secretary, the SDPI governs three panchayats in Ullal, has six members in the Ullal city municipal council, and two corporators in Mangaluru city corporation.

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) led by Sharad Pawar is planning to contest 40-45 seats in the upcoming elections. Pawar has summoned a meeting of party leaders in Mumbai to finalise plans. The move is also seen as an attempt by the NCP to regain the national party status it had to forego due to its depleted political fortunes in states such as Goa, Meghalaya, and Manipur. The NCP had written to the Election Commission for the allocation of the 'alarm clock' symbol for the

People gathered to attend a rally by the Bharatiya Janata Party in Karnataka where PM Modi spoke

Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) has decided to field six candidates in the twin coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi to make its presence felt in the region

Karnataka Assembly elections, a request that was acceded to by the poll authority.

The All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) has also expressed interest in contesting the Karnataka polls. As per the Tamil Nadu-based party, it has eyes on 10 constituencies where there were a sizable number of Tamil voters. However, it remains to be seen whether the party will be able to make an impact in the state, given that it is a regional party with limited presence outside of Tamil Nadu.

The Bhartiya Rashtra Samiti (BRS) led by KCR has already clarified that it will not contest the Assembly polls in Karnataka but will extend its support to JD(S). Both KCR and HD Kumaraswamy share a close bond, and the latter was seen at the launch of the BRS party in Hyderabad earlier.

There are also reports that the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) is planning to contest the Karnataka elections. Earlier, there were reports that the Owaisi-headed party was planning to field a candidate against Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai in Shiggaon constituency.

JD(S) cashing in on rebellion

With the two lists of candidates for the Assembly polls leaving several ticket aspirants disappointed, the national parties are facing rebellion on a large scale in Karnataka.

While the Congress and BJP are engaged in fire-fighting, the Janata Dal (Secular) - waging a battle against the national parties - is all set to utilise the rebellion to its advantage ahead of the elections.

JD(S) is all set to accommodate rebel candidates who missed out tickets from both the parties in its second list.

The party has already announced the first list of 93 candidates ahead of national parties in December, 2022.

According to sources, the party is releasing its second list on Friday and will change the allotted tickets in the first list as well to accommodate rebels of national parties.

(With agency inputs)

Pre-poll wrap: What is Karnataka up to?

BY Vijayendra slams nepotism allegations

Karnataka BJP leader and former chief minister BS Yediyurappa's son BY Vijayendra on Friday said that the party has given him ticket and that he feels blessed to contest the assembly polls from Shikaripur.

"I am blessed to contest from the constituency that my father represented for 40 years. I am happy to contest from Shikaripur. It is a dream come true for me...It's unfair to say that I've been given a ticket as I am BS Yediyurappa's son," Vijayendra said while speaking to ANI.

"Today BJP has reached every nook and corner of Karnataka because of BS Yediyurappa and other senior leaders. Today Karnataka is happy with PM Modi's leadership and THE double-engine government," he added.

File photo of BY Vijayendra, son of former CM BS Yediyurappa

On Wednesday, senior BJP leader BS Yediyurappa said that the party was trying to pacify those not happy with the choice of candidates amid rumours of dissent in the ranks following the unveiling of the party's first list of candidates for the ensuing Karnataka Assembly polls.

His remarks followed a series of resignations and retirements by BJP leaders, who were denied tickets to contest the May 10 elections.

Ticket for Shettar 'under consideration'

Amid uncertainty over whether the BJP would give a ticket to senior leader and former Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar to contest in the May 10 Assembly polls, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi on Friday said the matter was under the consideration of the party high command, and expressed hope that it would be resolved "smoothly".

The BJP top brass, ahead of releasing the first list of candidates earlier this week, had told Shettar to make way for others, but he asserted that he wanted to contest one last time.

The party has not announced a candidate for the Hubballi-Dharwad Central segment represented by him.

"Ticket for Jagadish Shettar is under the consideration of the party's national leadership. We have expressed our opinion very clearly that the ticket should be given to Jagadish Shettar. Shettar and I had met the national president and held discussions. Everything will be resolved smoothly," Joshi, who also hails from Karnataka, told reporters here.

The 67-year-old Shettar was called to Delhi by BJP national president JP Nadda after he made public his resentment over the party asking him to make way for others.

The BJP has so far announced candidates in 212 out of the total 224 seats in the Assembly.

(With agency inputs)

Laxman Savadi jumps ship

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Former Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister and BJP MLC Laxman Savadi has decided to join the Congress after being denied a ticket to contest in the May 10 Assembly elections. The saffron party received a jolt from its party men after the tickets were announced. In fact, on Thursday, Mudigere BJP MLA MP Kumaraswamy and Haveri MLA Nehru Olekar also announced their resignation from the primary membership of the party after they were denied tickets.

Savadi's decision came after a meeting with Karnataka Congress chief DK Shivakumar, leader of Opposition in the Assembly Siddaramaiah, and Congress general secretary and party in-charge of Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala. The meeting was said to have taken place in a cordial manner, and Savadi was welcomed into the Congress party. Karnataka Congress chief D.K Shivakumar said that Savadi was joining them after accepting the party's ideology and leadership.

His decision to join Congress has come as a shock to the BJP, which is already facing resignations from party members

Savadi, a three-time MLA from Athani in Belagavi district, had demanded a ticket to contest the elections and the completion of some irrigation projects in his constituency which have been pending for many years. However, the BJP had given the Athani ticket to sitting MLA Mahesh Kumathalli, who had earlier joined the BJP after defecting from the Congress. Savadi had been loyal to the BJP and helped the party candidates win in other parts of the state as well, but it did not live up to its promise of fielding him in the 2023 Assembly election from Athani.

Savadi's decision to join the Congress has come as a shock to the BJP, which is already facing resignations from party members after the ticket announcements. However, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said he was 'saddened' by Savadi's decision to part ways with the BJP and join the Congress. He added that sometimes such political situations arise, and Savadi might have found his political future in the Congress. Bommai also stated that the BJP will do its job in the party.

Meanwhile, Karnataka in-charge Arun Singh has hit out at the Congress, saying it was taking too long to release a third list of candidates as there is an "internal battle" among its leaders. He also defended the BJP's move of introducing fresh faces as candidates.

Woman tries to jump off police station building

Timely action by police on Friday saved the life of a woman who attempted to jump off a police station building in Mudigere town in Chikkamagaluru. According to sources, the incident took place in Mudigere police station. Police have taken the woman into custody after rescuing her in a dramatic development.

A complaint was lodged against Shilpa, a resident of Hale Mudigere village, regarding a dispute with her sister in Mudigere police station in 2022.

She also faced charges of assaulting women staff of the police station. The court has issued the summons to her for not attending the proceedings. Shilpa had come to the police station with the summons and climbed atop the police station and threatened to jump off the police station and end her life. The police staff managed to divert her attention and managed to catch hold of her and foiled her attempt. **IANS**

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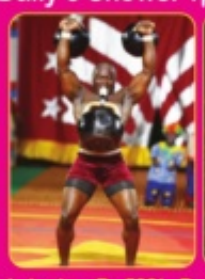

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Ajay Kumar Kureel R/o # N 1203, Durga Petals Apts. Doddanekundi, Bangalore-560037 have changed my name to Ajay Kumar

I, JYOTHI LAKSHMI U B W/o. Ramamoorthi, residing at #E-932, 8th Floor, 2nd Phase, 'O' Block, HMT Main Road, Near Goraguntepalya, Platinum City, Yeshwanthpur, Bengaluru 560022 have changed my name to JYOTHI LAKSHMI vide affidavit dated 13.04.2023 Sworn before notary: Gangaraju.B.N. Bengaluru

I, P Prathima R/o #319, Needs3 Project100, Parapana agrahara, Harluru Road, B'lore 560100 have changed my minor daughter name from Ridhi Pothuraju to Ridhi Padmaraju.

I,**SHILPA** Rajesh Kumar W/o. , Rajesh Kumar .N D.O.B: 20.02.1982, R/o No. 28, 3rd Cross,4th main road Mathikere, Bengaluru-560054, have changed my name to Shilpa Garg vide affidavit dated: 13.04.2023 before notary CHANDRAKALA, Bengaluru.

I, SHASHIDHARA.K.L S/O LAKSHMANA.M, residing at 157,Maddur Road 1st Cross Kunigal Tumkur District-572130 have changed my name SHASHIDHARA.K.L. to SHASHIDHAR.K.L for all future purposes.

I Ramesh Sameer Patel S/O, Ramesh Velgilal Patel R/o A141, Vistaas Apartment, 7th Cross Road, Nyanappanahalli Main Road, Devarachikkanahalli, Bangalore - 560114 have changed my name to Sameer Ramesh Patel

I, Akanksha Deepak Shikhre, D/o of Prajakta Shikhre R/o at Gottigere, Bangalore, have changed my name to Akanksha Charlie Pierce Durai, vide affidavit dtd: 06.04.23, for all purposes.

GET NOTICED

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ಜಿಯಾರ್ ಟೀ ಎಸ್ಟೇಟ್‌ಗಳಿಂದ
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Europe off-limits? Let's explore Asia

As Schengen visa uncertainty hits, travellers decide to take Asian detour

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Travel agents advise clients to consider destinations where getting a visa is hassle-free

Holidaymakers from Bengaluru and other Indian cities are opting to travel to West Asia or Southeast Asia instead of popular European destinations like Italy, France, and Germany due to uncertainties over Schengen visas. Travel agents and tour operators are advising their clients to consider destinations where getting visas will not be a problem.

While embassies and consulates claim that visa processing times have not changed, the challenge lies in scheduling an appointment for biometrics before submitting documents. Visa outsourcing firms perform biometrics, but the respective diplomatic missions decide how many slots to open and when. France and Italy currently have no available appointment slots, while Germany's earliest slot is in June, and it is two months for the Netherlands.

This uncertainty is causing cancellations, and travel agents are promoting destinations like Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Riyadh, and Muscat in West Asia, and Singapore, Bangkok, Phuket, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Hanoi, and Ha Long Bay in Southeast Asia. A representative of travel agents' association said that a few of the travel operators are recommending these destinations to ensure a hassle-free summer holiday.

> **Until a month ago, the problem countries were US and Germany. But now, France and Italy too have joined the ranks, making travel to Europe difficult**
> –Travel agents' association

"Until a month ago, the problem countries were the US and Germany. While the wait time for a visa appointment to the US was over a year, that of Germany is almost three months. But now, France and Italy have joined ranks, making summer travel to Europe fraught with uncertainty," said the representative.

Travel agents have pointed out that France and Germany require hotels and flights to be booked before applying for biometrics, leading to further uncertainty and the possibility of incurring cancellation fees if the appointment date is beyond the intended travel period. The uncertainty regarding visa processing is causing travellers to avoid Europe and plan holidays elsewhere.

Many Bengaluru travellers say that the visa hurdle for Schengen visas is causing them anxiety and forcing them to forget about Europe for the time-being as their travel agents to have suggested alternative destinations where planning and waiting for the summer vacation trip is not that much of an ordeal.

Court gives 4 months to K'taka govt to build school

Shocked at the lackadaisical attitude of the state authorities, the High Court has ordered them to identify land and start construction of a school building in a village in Mandya on June 1 and complete it within four months.onths.

The direction came after a petition by the local School Development and Monitoring Committee's petition in the High Court.

The old school building in Agaralingana Doddi village, Maddur, was demolished for the widening of National Highway 275 between Bengaluru and Mysuru. A compensation of Rs 67 lakh was also paid, but the State government insisted that this amount should be first deposited in the government's consolidated fund and would then be released to the Committee for construction of the school. The compensation released in 2020 is thus still untilised.

"It shocks the conscience of the Court looking at the state of the children and the lackadaisical attitude of the State. The officers of the state must remember that the rights of every citizen matters and no child can be left behind. The issue before this Court is not "just one school," it is "every one school." This Court would not permit the State to reduce the fundamental right of children under Article 21-A of the Constitution of India, to a "mere rope of sand," Justice M Nagaprasanna said in his judgment on April 13.

The counsel for the Committee argued before the HC that the State has been issuing communication after communication from one office to the other, but has not rendered its decision to establish a new school. The school is now being run in a small room. The government advocate argued that the compensation amount should first come to the consolidated fund of the state and then the state would release funds for the school building.

The HC, in its judgement quoted an example from Japan on the attitude governments should have towards education. "What should be the concern of the State towards the education of a child can best be illustrated by a fact: In a remote place on the island of Hokkaido, Japan there lives a girl who goes to high school. The only child who goes to the school was at that place. The trains run by the state stop only to pick up the girl for school and later, to drop her back," the judgment stated. –PTI

How inclusive is the city's police force

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and women in the police department, but new provisions are being introduced to ensure that the number increases gradually," the DCP added.

Another female officer said that if we compare the numbers from the past 10 years, it appears there has been a gradual increase in the number of female police officers: "It is evident on the ground that there is a big difference in the ratio of men and women in the police department; however, I believe a gradual change is occurring. Ten years ago, the condition was much worse, but now you can at least spot female officers everywhere. Moreover, I think there is a problem with recruitment as Bengaluru's population is increasing at a fast pace; so we do require more policemen on the ground."

Poorna, a lawyer working at the Alternative Law Forum, told BM that the difference can be attributed to structural inequality and discrimination.

"Officials who are in higher ranks have to clear certain exams so we have to think about how many women get the opportunity to receive higher education. It depends on how supportive the families are because these exams require some years for preparation. It's easier for those who are not working, to crack these competitive exams. In the interview as well, there would be questions about transfers and moving to a different city; many women can't take that decision immediately because of their social roles. Even if you look at the 14%, there will be few women from OBC, Dalit or other minority communities. All these inequalities in the society will reflect on the workforce," she said.

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 # Protest for wages hits Zomato
Around 50 stores of food delivery company Zomato's grocery unit Blinkit are shut as bike riders have stopped work to push demands for better wages

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AAP smells conspiracy in CBI summons to Kejriwal

Delhi CM to appear before agency; fight against corruption won't stop, says party

#New Delhi

The CBI Friday summoned Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on April 16 in connection with the excise policy scam case, in which his former deputy Manish Sisodia was arrested last month.

According to the notice issued by the CBI, Kejriwal has been called to appear at the agency headquarters at 11 am on Sunday to answer queries of the investigating team as a witness in the case, officials said.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) called it a conspiracy and confirmed that Kejriwal will appear before the agency on Sunday.

There are allegations that money raised from tweaking the policy in favour of certain liquor dealers and the South lobby was suspected to be pumped in for election purposes by the AAP, which is under the probe as part of the money trail, agency sources said.

They said the process of policy formulation and influence of South lobby, besides changes in the draft stages, was in the know of the chief minister, which makes it necessary to put questions to him.

Arvind Kejriwal at the birth anniversary celebrations of Dr BR Ambedkar organised by MCD in New Delhi on Friday

Kejriwal may also be asked about an "untraceable" file containing details of the expert committee and public comments when the policy was at a nascent stage of formulation and referral of the issue to Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Sisodia; besides his possible conversation with suspects in the case, they said.

Sources have stated that the final role of Kejriwal, whether as a witness or an accused, will be decided while filing a charge sheet in the case after considering multiple factors.

As of now, the chief minister is expected to answer questions as a witness, they said.

The CBI is bracing for an elaborate security arrangement around its headquarters and hence kept the questioning day on Sunday, when offices in the vicinity remain closed.

The agency had adopted the same strategy when Sisodia was called at the agency headquarters, where he was grilled for eight hours before being taken into custody.

The allegations revolve around the Delhi government's excise policy for 2021-22, which is accused of granting licences to liquor traders who had allegedly paid bribes for it, a charge refuted by the AAP. The policy was later scrapped. – PTI

Rahul Gandhi starts shifting belongings

#New Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has tarted shifting his belongings from his 12, Tughlaq Lane residence as he was asked to vacate the premises by April 22 following his disqualification from Lok Sabha. Two trucks were seen parked outside his residence and the belongings were later shifted to his mother's 10, Janpath residence. Sources said Gandhi is likely to soon vacate the official bungalow allotted to him. While Rahul Gandhi has seen a number of houses, he may also opt to stay with his mother and Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi. The Secretariat had sent Gandhi a notice asking him to vacate the premises by April 22. – PTI

Workers move goods from 12 Tughlak Lane, on Friday

Centre rejects prosecution of Army men

#Kohima

The Centre has denied sanction to prosecute 30 Army men who were allegedly involved in the December 2021 killing of 13 civilians in a botched ambush at Oting in Nagaland's Mon district, an official said.

This has been communicated by Nagaland police to the Mon district and sessions judges court, where the charge sheet has been filed, as required by law, IGP of CID, Nagaland, Roopa M said in a release here on Thursday.

"The competent authority (Department of Military Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Government of India) has conveyed its denial to accord sanction for prosecution against all the 30 accused," she said.

The sanction by the Government of India is mandatory for intitiating legal suit against any personnel of the security forces for any action taken by them while discharging their duties under section 197(2) Cr.P.C and Section 6 of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), the release said.

The anniversary of the killing of 13 civilians in Mon district (file)

The charge sheet in the case was filed by Nagaland police on May 30, 2022, Roopa said.

The Army had set up a 'court of inquiry' on the incident but the findings have not been made public.

At least six daily wage earners returning home in a vehicle from Tiru valley coal mine bordering Assam were gunned down allegedly by the security forces in a failed counter-insurgency operation at Oting village in Mon district on December 4, 2021.

Seven more villagers were shot dead later reportedly by the security forces following a scuffle with a group of villagers who had found the bodies in an army vehicle.

The SIT of Nagaland Police was constituted by the state home department the very next day. – PTI

Remembering the great

A 125-feet statue of Dr BR Ambedkar that was inaugurated on his birth anniversary is seen overlooking new secretariat building in Hyderabad, on Friday

European spacecraft on way to Jupiter and its icy moons

#Paris

A European spacecraft rocketed away Friday on a decadelong quest to explore Jupiter and three of its icy moons that could have buried oceans.

The journey began with a perfect morning liftoff by Europe's Ariane rocket from French Guiana on the coast of South America. But there were some tense minutes later as controllers awaited signals from the spacecraft.

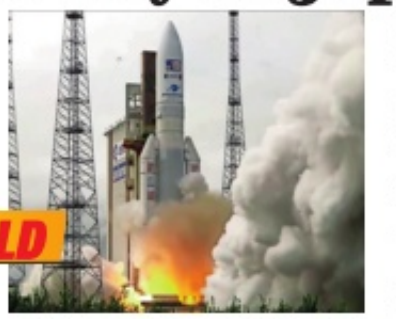
When contact finally was confirmed close to an hour into the flight, Mission Control in Germany declared "The spacecraft is alive!"

"It's a moment of pride for Europe," noted Josef Aschbacher, the space agency's director general. "I'm just relieved and just so happy."

It will take the robotic explorer, dubbed Juice, eight years to reach Jupiter, where it will scope out not only the solar system's biggest planet but also Europa, Callisto and Ganymede.

WORLD

The three ice-encrusted moons are believed to harbor underground oceans, where sea life could exist. Then in perhaps the most impressive feat of all, Juice will attempt to go into orbit around Ganymede: No spacecraft has ever orbited a moon other than our own.



In this image provided by the European Space Agency, an Ariane rocket carrying the robotic explorer Juice takes off from Europe's Spaceport

With so many moons,— at last count 95 — astronomers consider Jupiter a mini solar system of its own, with missions like Juice long overdue. "We are not going to detect life with Juice," stressed project scientist, Olivier Witasse.

But learning more about the moons and their potential seas will bring scientists closer to answering the is-there-life-elsewhere question. "That will be really the most interesting aspect of the mission," Witasse said. Juice is taking a long, roundabout route to Jupiter, covering 4 billion miles (6.6 billion kilometers)

It will swoop within 125 miles (200 kilometers) of Callisto and 250 miles (400 kilometres) of Europa and Ganymede, completing 35 flybys while circling Jupiter. Then it will hit the brakes to orbit Ganymede, the primary target of the 1.6 billion-euro mission (nearly $1.8 billion).

Ganymede is not only the solar system's largest moon — it surpasses Mercury — but has its own magnetic field with dazzling auroras at the poles. Even more enticing, it's thought to have an underground ocean holding more water than Earth. – AP

HEALTH TIP: The bulk of food consumption should consist of healthy foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk products

Healthy snacks are OK in moderation and should consist of items like fruit, whole grains, or nuts to satisfy hunger and not cause excessive weight gain

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What's causing motion sickness?

Here's how to reconcile mismatch in what your senses are telling your brain

My first experience with motion sickness was as a college student, standing on the back of a marine research vessel looking at interesting things dredged from the seafloor.

It was a day trip, the weather was good and the sea was calm. I was unaware of the boat's gentle pitching and rolling, instead concentrating on the mud and organisms on a table in front of me.

Then, slowly I began to feel warm and to salivate. I felt exhausted, although I was well rested. There were intense waves of nausea, and I began vomiting. It was a long afternoon.

Once back on shore, I felt as if I were still moving. I didn't feel back to normal until the next day.

In retrospect, this was the perfect situation for a bout of motion sickness. I was focused on my immediate environment – the table covered with ocean specimens – which was visually stable.

My eyes were unaware that we were, in fact, shifting up, down and side to side with the waves. But my inner ear was signalling all of this movement to my brain.

Sensory signals from the muscles and joints of my body were providing information that was like a cross between the visual input from my eyes and the balance feedback from my inner ears' motion detectors.

In short, my senses were in conflict. I was in an environment that conflicted with a lifetime of expectations about how sensory information usually combined to inform me about the world.

My brain recognised something was wrong and attempted to save me from things that it was designed to deal with – poisoning or other illness.

To my brain, emptying my stomach contents and forcing me to rest and recuperate seemed the perfect solution.

For me, this event preceded a lifetime of work studying the vestibular system, which are the inner ear and brain structures and functions that allow you to remain oriented and stable in space.

In my laboratory, my colleagues and I reproduce these kinds of complex motions and conflicting sensory inputs and study how the brain uses them during development, in normal adult behaviour and in disease.

Ultimately, we hope to produce treatments for people who are disabled by a loss or disruption of these senses.

Mismatch of a great system and unusual situation

Any moving environment can trigger motion sickness. It's not usually due to illness or pathology. Instead, motion sickness is the result of your nervous system functioning optimally, based on what it's learned throughout your life.

When processing sensory information and generating motor commands, the brain constantly monitors and adjusts its inputs and outputs to perform the tasks of life efficiently.

For example, to see clearly while turning your head, your brain moves your eye opposite and equal to the motion of your head. It does so based on feedback from the sensors in your inner ear that focus on balance.

Your brain constantly monitors this reflex behaviour, making continual adjustments to make sure that your eye and head movements match perfectly.

The efficiency of this system is based on experience and outcome, and it works well.

It helps you get better at coordinating your movements and maintaining your balance while you're growing, and helps you recover from imbalance and disorientation due to injury, illness and aging later in life.

The downside of this process is that the nervous system is unprepared for things with which it has no experience.

It explains in part why astronauts experience transient nausea while adapting to weightlessness, why sailors get seasick and why watching a movie on your iPad in the back seat of a car or playing an immersive virtual reality video game may become unpleasant.

> **Typically, infants and very young children do not experience motion sickness; It is older children who are highly prone to motion sickness**

Human beings did not evolve as a species to do these things.

So someone who is motion sick is really exhibiting skillful and optimised functioning in a uniquely challenging and suboptimal environment.

Changes over the life span

Typically, infants and very young children do not experience motion sickness. Older children are highly prone to motion sickness as they learn typical relationships between the different senses.

As people age further into adulthood, the susceptibility to motion sickness typically dwindles again, presumably because they're able to contextualise their experiences.

In older adults, such changes as loss of receptor cells in the ear and eye, fogging of the eye's lens or loss of functioning in peripheral nerves, motion sickness may either increase or decrease. Usually, though, the incidence of motion sickness in a healthy older adult continues to decline.

Techniques to deal with motion sickness

If you experience motion sickness, there are several strategies you can use to feel better.

The first is to resolve the conflicting sensory information that your situation is creating.

Look at an Earth-stabilised reference – focusing at the shore or horizon if you are on a boat, for example, or moving to the front seat in the car and looking out the window.

This way, you align the incoming visual and inner-ear vestibular information.

The second strategy is to reduce the information that is causing the conflict.

There are several medications that work by suppressing inner-ear vestibular information, and others that change the way that sensory information is processed centrally in your brain.

You can also try to prevent the output of this conflict.

Essentially, you can sabotage the central nervous system's attempts to save you from your situation by short-circuiting the mechanisms that produce the motor response of vomiting.

Taking anti-nausea drugs reduces nausea without necessarily resolving the sensory conflict that induced it.

You can eventually adapt, through repeated experience, to many novel situations.

When your brain learns a new normal, it allows you to function with fewer unwanted symptoms in the challenging environment.

-By James Phillips (The Conversation)

All problems solved

Dear Coleen

My husband and I are both 37, have been married for nearly 10 years, and have two kids. The past few years have been very hard for our marriage and we've been cruel to each other, and it's now make or break.

I suppose I started the bad behaviour when I got too involved with a male friend. We never slept together, but we were very close and I used our relationship to hurt my husband. It wasn't nice.

In retaliation, and I think to prove something to himself, my husband had an actual affair which lasted a few weeks.

It's been horrible, especially trying to keep things normal for our children.

My dilemma is, I want us to have a proper break from our marriage in the hope it'll help us to reconnect and save the relationship, but I'm worried that it might end up being the first step to divorce.

COLEEN SAYS

I do think taking time out can help and I know several couples it's worked very well for, but I think it's important to agree on some boundaries.

If you're doing it to save your marriage, then it's not a green light to live a single life.

You need some proper time apart and the chance to miss each other, while knowing your partner is committed and the purpose is the same for both of you.

You also need to have boundaries around childcare arrangements and, when you do see each other to talk, it's probably best if it's in a neutral space such as a café or a park. And how long are you prepared to give this break?

I'd strongly recommend having relationship counselling to support the process. It would help you to put those boundaries in place and give you both the space to be seen and heard.

It's important to be honest with yourselves.

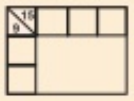
—Coleen Nolan, Daily Mirror

SOLVE IT IN A MINUTE

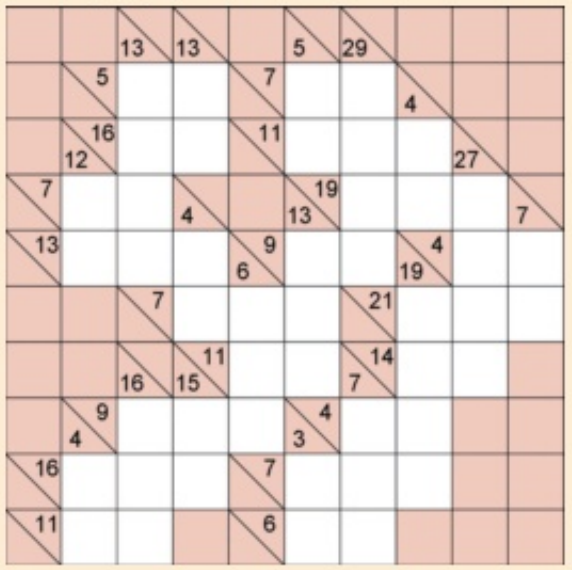
$9^{2^{-1}} + \sqrt[1]{[9]} \times 3\sqrt{[3^2]} = ?$

Kakuro

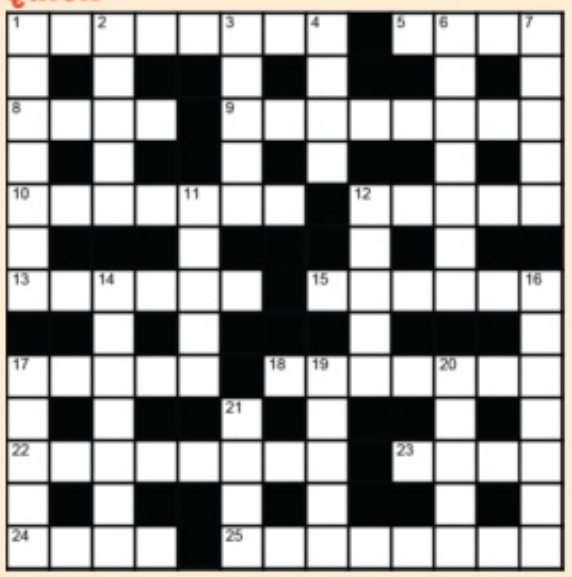
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Tomb inscriptions (8)
5 Slightly wet (4)
8 Snack from the South (4)
9 Air India, Lufthansa, Indigo, etc (8)
10 Computer screen (7)
12 ____ Thomas : famous poet? (5)
13 Sarcophagus (6)
15 Vigour, spirit (6)
17 Female horses (5)
18 Ms Kapoor of Bollywood (7)
22 Where in Karnataka Shiravati River drops 253 meters (3,5)
23 Largest cat (4)
24 Travel in or on (4)
25 Overly concerned with (8)

DOWN

1 Prevailing or widespread (7)
2 Peer Gynt author (5)
3 Musical instrument (5)
4 Nimble (4)
6 Ring-shaped (7)
7 South Korean seaport (5)
11 Cuts or lops (5)
12 One who is eating out (5)
14 Sought fodder (7)
16 Longed for (7)
17 Important (5)
19 Part of a poetic foot (5)
20 Revises copy (5)
21 High male voice (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: T EQUALS G

DWSYLT GUVMAGA YA LHB THYLT BH TGB DG WLP VRHAGO BH DP THWRA.

Linemaro

You could have modelled for Botticelli's Venus

Mindchow

The kindest thing you can do for the people you care about is to become a happy, joyous person

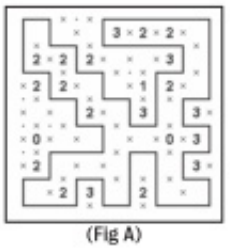
Joke of the day

Politically incorrect: He is falling down drunk. Politically correct: He is accidentally horizontal

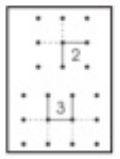
Loop

Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.



(Fig A)



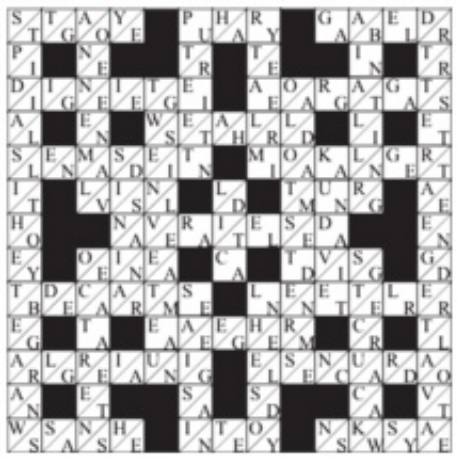
(Fig B) Not Allowed

How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)

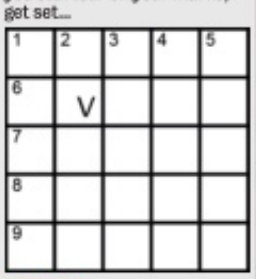
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

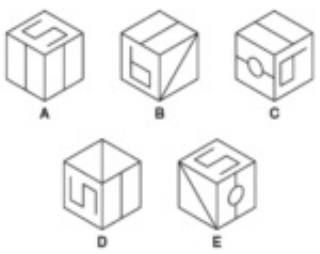
1 Acids; 6 Envoi; 7 Atone; 8 Merit; 9 Bolts

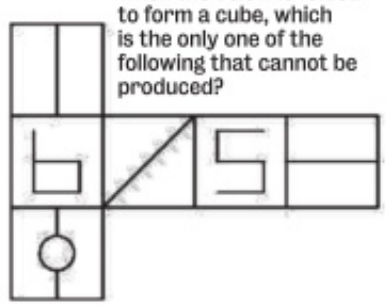
DOWN

1 Combo; 2 I lava; 3 Id Tot; 4 Niter; 5 Essen

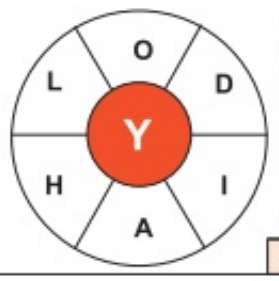
Mensapuzzle

When the below is folded to form a cube, which is the only one of the following that cannot be produced?





Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

05 Average; **06** Good; **08** Outstanding

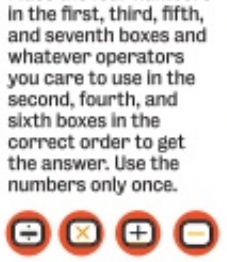
SudokuChallenge

2			4		5			1
4				6				2
		9	2		1	6		
		2	5		4	3		
	3						7	
		1	6		7	8		
		4	3		2	7		
5				9				3
8			1		6			9

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.



Easy = 9
3 3 5 9

Medium = 45
5 8 8 9

Hard = 36
3 6 8 5

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Arm is longer. 2. Box of cookies is larger. 3. Leg is moved. 4. Bush is missing. 5. Word on box is lower. 6. Collar is different.

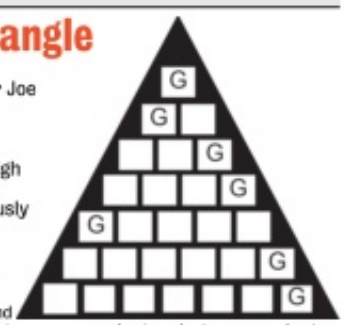
Riddler

Use synonyms of the following phrases to decode popular movie titles.

1.) Razors of Honour
2.) Wonder-male Comes Back
3.) Ruler of the Bands
4.) Endless Light of the Unstained Head
5.) Super Quartet
6.) Mandibles

Alpha triangle

1 Gram, abbr.
2 American soldier Joe
3 Big van
4 Circle
5 Area between abdomen and thigh
6 Looking through
7 Playing boisterously



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Redeye by Mel Casson

DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH THREE TIMES ZERO IS, LOCO?
STOMP STOMP STOMP
YEAH! THAT SOUNDS RIGHT... THREE!
SCHOOL
I SEE YOU'VE BEEN HELPING POKEY WITH HIS HOMEWORK!

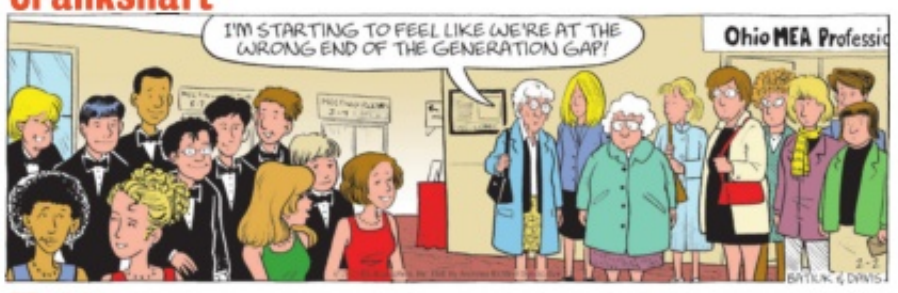
Bizarrotrip

Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

WE ONLY HAVE ONE DAY AT THE CON. HOW ARE WE GONNA FIT EVERYTHING IN?
HERE'S WHAT I RECOMMEND: FROM 10AM TO 12PM WE DO ARTISTS' ALLEY. THEN FROM 12PM TO 2PM WE'LL GET IN LINE FOR YOUR SIGNINGS AND PHOTO OPS. LUNCH AND PANELS FROM 3PM TO 5PM. THEN WE DO THE COSTUME CONTEST UNTIL 6PM! WE DRIVE HOME, AND YOU'LL ALL BE BACK BEFORE BEDTIME!
THIS IS NOT MY DAD'S FIRST RODEO.

Crankshaft



Mutts

AND NOW, OUR METEOROLOGIST, EARL, WITH THE FORECAST.
WE'RE PREDICTING A MAJOR SNOWSTORM, SO I SUGGEST YOU STAY INDOORS.
LIKE I HAVE A CHOICE.
STORM WATCH

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today, you are blessed by the moon, and your small investments may convert into big profits. Your working efficiency may increase now, and you are likely to get success with less effort. You may also hear good news in legal matters, and have full control over your opponents and rivals.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Today, you are blessed by the moon, and your small efforts may give you success. You are likely to have good profits from your past investments, and you may get rewards for your hard work in professional and domestic life. Your prestige may increase now, and you may start new innovation in the business. Disputes with the spouse may also be resolved.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today, you may feel better, and situations may be under control. Your network may help you on the work front, and you may plan for overseas travel. This is a good time to increase domestic harmony and love life. With the help of creativity, you may bring some artifacts or creative stuff for your family. You may also plan to watch movies or go for outings with friends or family.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Today, you may get tired due to overworking, which may make you lazy and careless. You are advised to keep patience, and if you are planning for an adventure tour, you are advised to postpone it for a while. Your past investments may convert into dead stock, and students are advised to work hard. You may also experience backache, nervous system, liver-related issues, and skin issues.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today, your creativity may be on a high, and you may plan to renovate your house. You may buy some stuff to renovate your house or office, which may increase your social status. There is likely to be some harmony with the spouse, which creates harmony in domestic life. Disputes with friends, co-workers, and partners may be settled down, and you may get good news in terms of litigations.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Today, you will feel happiness and will be able to maintain a balance between your earning and expenditure, which will boost your finances. Your network will help you to implement your plans, and your siblings and subordinate staff will be more helpful today. Plan to visit elders or a religious place.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today, you may feel dullness due to sleeplessness and may be scattered towards your goals, which may affect your working efficiency. You may plan to visit some religious place, but in the late evening, you may be blessed by your elders. You may find out your mistakes and make a good plan for the coming day. You are advised to take care of your parents' health.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Today, until late afternoon, you may feel dullness in your nature, which may reflect in your way of working. But with the help of elder's blessings, you may likely come back to your speed. You may likely pay extra attention to your kid's health and be in a winning position against your enemies and opponents. Investors shall be careful while taking difficult decisions. Stomach issues may also make you upset.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today, you may be happy at work and likely to take some important decisions by the end of the day, which will help you in the near future. You may also plan for a short trip. Your subordinates may be cooperative, and you may expect some good news in terms of sibling's success. You may likely be in winning positions of legal matters, and students may be more focused to achieve their targets.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today, your communication skills may help you on the professional front. You are likely to be more polite with everyone around you, which may help speed up your projects. Love birds may exchange their views with each other, laying the foundation for their relationship.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Today, you are blessed by the moon. A new partnership may give you benefits, and your energy level may be high. Your hard work and enthusiasm may pay off in terms of financial gains. Self-respect may protect you from negative people around you.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Today, you may meet some old friends or be busy with social gatherings. You may be more excited today. There may be new innovations in terms of business, and you may have some unexpected material gains. Kids may have good news in terms of studies, and love birds may enjoy their quality moments.

KIDZONE

Pavithra L, 13 Years, Indiranagar Cambridge School

Yukthi S, 13 Years, Indiranagar Cambridge School

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No.4, KSCCF Compound, Pampa Maha Kavi Road, Chamrajpet, Bengaluru 560 018; Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
9*½+9+3√[9]
3+27-3
3+81
84

BULL'S EYE
stony, daily, dolly, HOLIDAY, holy, idly, lady, oily

FAST FIVE

C	A	D	I	S
O	V	I	N	E
O	A	T	E	N
M	I	T	R	E
B	L	O	T	S

QUOTE UNCODE
Making excuses is not going to get me any closer to my goals.

STRIKE OUT

S	T	A	V	Y	P	A	R	A	B	E	D			
S	A	S	H		N	E	Y		S	K	Y	E		
	L	E	A	D	E	N		M	O	A	N	E	R	
	L	E		W	E	A	L	D	I		T			
	T	C	N	T	E		A	O	R	T	A	S		
	N		T		A		D		C		V			
	A	G	E	I	N	G		E	S	C	U	D	O	
	E		T		E	A	G	E	R		R		L	
	B	E	C	A	M	E		N	E	T	T	L	E	
	H		E	O	N	E		C		T	I	S		G
	T		L	I	L		M	E	L	G				N
			A	V	A	I	L	E	D					A
			I		R									R
		C	O	M			E	N	E	R	G	Y		
	C	O	F	F	I	N		E	N	E	R	G	Y	
M	O	N	I	T	O	R		D	Y	L	A	N		
		E		N		Y		U		A				
	A	I	R	L	I	N	E	S						
	O	S	A		A	O	R	T	A	S				
T	C	N	T	E		A	O	R	T	A	S			
L	E		W	E	A	L	D	I		T				
L	E	A	D	E	N		M	O	A	N	E	R		
T	L	I	L		M	E	L	G		A				
H		A	V	A	I	L	E	D		N				
E		O	N	E		C		T	I	S		G		
B	E	C	A	M	E		N	E	T	T	L	E		
A	G	E	I	N	G		E	S	C	U	D	O		
E		T		E	A	G	E	R		R		L		
S	T	A	V	Y	P	A	R		A	B	E	D		

QUICK

E	P	I	T	A	P	H	S		D	A	M	P		
R	I	D	E		O	B	S	E	S	S	E	D		
		E		T		I		P		N		U		
O		E		T		I		N		E		S		
J	O	G	G	F	A	L	L	S		L	I	O	N	
A		A		A		R				D		R		
M	A	R	E	S		K	A	R	E	E	N	A		
	O		M				E				E			
C	O	F	F	I	N		E	N	E	R	G	Y		
	I		R								A			
M	O	N	I	T	O	R		D	Y	L	A	N		
	E		N		Y		U		A					
	A	I	R	L	I	N	E	S						
	O	S	A		A	O	R	T	A	S				
N	B		I		P		N		U					
E	P	I	T	A	P	H	S		D	A	M	P		
R	I	D	E		O	B	S	E	S	S	E	D		

MENSA PUZZLE
D

RIDDLER
1.) Blades of Glory, 2.) Superman Returns, 3.) Lord of the Rings, 4.) Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, 5.) Fantastic Four, 6.) Jaws

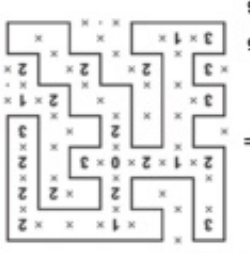
SUDOKU

2	6	8	4	7	5	9	3	1
4	1	7	9	6	3	5	8	2
3	5	9	2	8	1	6	4	7
7	8	2	5	1	4	3	9	6
6	3	5	8	2	9	1	7	4
9	4	1	6	3	7	8	2	5
1	9	4	3	5	2	7	6	8
5	2	6	7	9	8	4	1	3
8	7	3	1	4	6	2	5	9

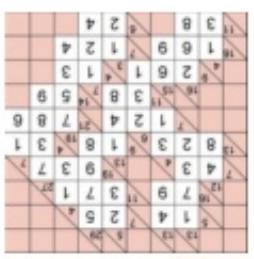
ALPHA TRIANGLE
G, GI, RIG, RING, GIRON, PORING, ROMPING.

GO FIGURE
3 x 5 + 3 - 9 = 9
Medium
8 - 8 + 5 x 9 = 45
Hard
3 + 8 - 5 x 6 = 36

LOOP



KAKURO



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Happily single

Pooja denies rumours about her dating Salman

To link actors who are working together has become a common trope in the movie business and the latest victims of this trend are Salman Khan and Pooja Hegde, who are paired opposite each other in Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan. The rumour about their dating has been going on for a while, it got more attention when Salman attended Pooja's brother Rishabh's wedding reception, though the two never accepted or denied their dating rumors till now.

In an exclusive conversation with ETimes, Pooja clarifies that she is not dating Salman, she says, "What do I say to that? I keep reading things about me. I am single. I love being single. I am genuinely concentrating on my career right now. I am hoping from one city to the other city, that's my goal right now. I can't even sit and address these rumours anymore because what do I do now?"

In fact, Salman has really liked Pooja's performance in the film and at the film's trailer launch he even praised and said, "She is outstanding in the film." The actress is currently in one of the best phases of her career, she has three big films lined up, which will be announced in the next few weeks. She is paired opposite Mahesh Babu in one of these big releases.

– Jigar Shah, ETimes

Action time

Actor Dino Morea, who played a negative character in the web series 'The Empire', is set to essay a baddie once again in his Telugu debut film 'Agent'. The film also stars Mammootty and Akhil Akkineni. Dino's first poster from the film was unveiled on Friday. The actor also shared that he got to explore his love for action in the film.

Talking about his role and his look, the actor said: "Being a baddie is never easy, especially when people have seen you in that lover boy image for the longest. But in Agent, I got to explore my love for action."

He added: "Yes, I will be doing some high-octane action in this one. I am sure people will like this one as much as they like Shaibani Khan, in fact, even more."

'Agent' is a spy thriller, directed by Surender Reddy. Meanwhile, Dino is also making his Malayalam debut with the film 'Bandra'. The film also stars Dileep and Tamannaah Bhatia. **–IANS**

Radhika weighs in on nasty truths

Radhika Apte minces no words when it comes to speaking the harsh truth about the film industry. She has talked about facing a difficult time during her initial days in the industry and an amount of judgement about her body type. In a new interview, Radhika revealed that she once lost a film because was overweight by 3 or 4 kilos.

Recently, Radhika had opened up about how she asked to get a nose job and bigger breasts. When she was asked if she still faces such comments in the industry, Radhika said that this might not be happening today. However, she added that in the beginning she lost a film because it was 3-4 kgs heavier. She also said that people made such comments about her body just because they thought they had the right.

She added that people can now talk about such things because of awareness. She said they can at least call them out if it happens and make sure that such people are out of the projects. She added that earlier there was no support system or awareness and they used to make fun about their bodies. On the work front, Radhika is seen playing Durga, a housewife and an undercover agent in the spy comedy Mrs Undercover. She had earlier said women-oriented subjects are liked by the audience. **–ETimes**

Marvellous job

Mia Goth, who rose to fame with last year's release 'X and Pearl' has bagged a Marvel project.

According to report, Mia has been cast in Marvel studio's 'Blade'.

Blade stars Mahershala Ali as the titular half-human, half-vampire who spends his time hunting vampires to avenge his late mother. 'Lovecraft Country' fame director Yann Demange will direct the project. Micheal Starrbury has penned the script.

As reported, comic book writer Marv Wolfman and artist Gene Colan introduced the world to Blade in 1973's The Tomb of Dracula No. 10 and Wesley Snipes played Blade in a trilogy of films New Line released in the 2000s.

The new 'Blade' was first announced at San Diego Comic-Con in 2019. It is expected to shoot in Atlanta.

Suspense is on

SHIVAJI SURATHKAL 2 (KANNADA)
3.5 RATING ★★★½★
- **DIRECTOR** Akash Srivatsa
- **ACTORS** Ramesh Aravind, Radhika Narayan, Nasser, Meghana Gaonkar, Baby Aradhya, Raghu Ramanakoppa, Poornachandra Mysore, Vinayak Joshi, Ramesh Bhat, Vidhya Murthy, Srinivas Prabhu, Veena Sundar, and Sangeetha Sringeri (special appearance).
- **Duration** 122 minutes

This film is a sequel to the successful Kannada movie Shivaji Surathkal that released in February 2020. Here the story begins with Shivaji Surathkal (Ramesh Aravind), an Assistant Commissioner of Police having nightmares. Shivaji Surathkal is very fond of his adopted daughter Chukki aka Siri (Baby Aradhya). He has to rush to Yellapur where Nidhi is brutally killed. At this juncture, the director narrates to the audiences under what circumstances Shivaji adopted Siri and the circumstances that made him marry Janani (Radhika Narayan), a pet lover, and what made his father Vijayendra Surathkal (Nasser), a Director General of Police, hate him.

Meanwhile, Deepa Kamath (Meghana Gaonker), a Deputy Commissioner of Police, asks Shivaji to investigate a high-profile missing case.

With Shivaji focusing on the investigation, the killer goes on killing more people. Who is the killer? Will Shivaji succeed in solving the serial murder is what Shivaji Surathkal 2 is all about.

Director Akash Srivatsa deserves appreciation for handling the megaphone with aplomb. Srivatsa's specialty is keeping the audiences guessing from the beginning to the end of the movie. Though the movie has many actors, the director gives importance to each by allowing them to share the screen without discrimination. He has aptly provided the much-needed relief to the audiences by introducing a special song – Twinkle Twinkle – in which Sangeetha Sringeri makes a special appearance. He has done justice in choosing her for the special appearance in which she shakes a leg with Ramesh Aravind and others.

Ramesh Aravind is at his best. As a good husband, affectionate foster father, obedient son-in-law, an honest and sincere police officer who is always at his higher authorities' beck and call, he has acted well. He walks away with all honours for his performance in some scenes where he suffers from problems such as hallucinations, migraines, and insomnia and the other scenes where he sees his dead wife talking with him and convincing him to take up responsibilities.

Radhika Narayanan has acted well. Meghana Gaonkar is convincing as a Deputy Commissioner of Police. Nasser's performance adds value to this movie. Vinayak Joshi, as a police inspector, Raghu Ramanakoppa, as a police constable, and Poornachandra Mysore, as a baddie, have acted well. Baby Aradhya is at her best. Her dialogues and body language and gestures are good and have the potential to make the audiences smile.

It is worth a watch for all, especially those who have a keen interest in murder mysteries.

–Y Maheswara Reddy